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**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:
TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN AND
AROUND A THAI NATIONAL PARK**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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2009

Certification

I, Aree Suwanmanee, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Aree Suwanmanee

Aree Suwanmanee

November 2009

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEK	central environmental knowledge
CNRA	central natural resource agency
CNRC	central natural resource conservation
CNCRC	Committee of Natural and Cultural Resource Conservation, under the National Environmental Broad
CRCC	Committee for Rivers, Canal Conservation, under the National Environmental Broad
DEQP	Department of Environmental Quality Promotion
DWR	Department of Water Resources
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KU	Khonkaen University
LNRC	Local natural resource conservation
MU	Mahasarakhum University
NGO	Non government agency
NPD	National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department
NR	Natural resource
NRC	Natural resource conservation
NRCP	Natural resource conservation for protection
NRM	Natural resource management
NRM/C	Natural resource management and conservation
NRMS	Natural resource management for sustainable utilization
NRNG	Northern regional NGO Group
ONEP	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
PLON	The name of a part of the national park in the study area
rai	Thai measure (1 rai = 400 square meters)
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WPCF	Wildlife and Plant Conservation Foundation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature (Thailand)

Abstract

This thesis traces the influential global conservation concepts playing various roles in the Thai natural resource conservation system. The overall purpose of this study is to investigate the intersection of conservation policies and cultures in and around national park management in Thailand. The objectives of this study are to look at approaches, concepts, and models of natural resource conservation in practices and discourses of the central agencies, local park officials, other official agencies, NGOs and indigenous people. The thesis highlights tensions and contradictions at the local level as national policies are implemented. The thesis results inform proposed strategies for future national park management and local resource conservation and utilization in Thailand.

Qualitative research approaches were the most appropriate methodological choice to investigate and analyse perceptions, objectives, values, practices of different groups. Informal conversational interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured direct observation were the techniques for key data collection. Discourse analysis was the main analytical method.

The results show that there are two main conservation concepts influencing conservation policy and implementation in and around the national park case study. One concept is the orthodox national park model based on conservation by excluding humans from a conservation area, and the other is a newer conservation concept based on the ideas of sustainability, participation, and biological conservation that accept humans as part of ecosystems. The two different concepts produce different cultures, discourses and practices in the Thai conservation system. A key issue demonstrated in this study is that the orthodox national park model plays a role as a cornerstone and strong influence on the culture of the Thai natural resource conservation system. As a result, the rights, interests, needs and values of indigenous people are marginalised by national park officials in national park management. Although, the new conservation concept that supports interests of indigenous people is accepted in the park policy, in practice it is devalued by the national park officials.

The idea and form of the national park cannot be divorced from its social origins. The idea of the national park as a space of wilderness or pristine nature is had to sustain.

Rather, it is a cultural landscape that embodies multiple cultural constructions of people and nature by both park officials and indigenous villagers. There are tensions and contradictions between these cultural groups. The tensions and contradictions are based on different values of the role of park resources for utilization or protection.

This study suggests that the villagers and their uses of park resources should be considered to a greater extent on social equality grounds. Their management and use of resources needs to be recognized in local natural resource planning and management. In addition, the park policy makers should renew national park management to integrate with the two different conservation concepts. They should accept the values of villagers who live in and adjacent to the national park and take them into account in national park policy and implementation. In this study, models of joint management are offered as an alternative to current Thai national park management. This can support both the needs and values of villagers and those of ecological conservation.

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Aree Suwanmanee

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